

INTERNET COLLECTION

Louis F. Sander

To Whom It May Concern:

If you enjoy any of these writings, I hope you will let me know which ones you like, and why (the more specifically, the better). Also let me know if you *don't* like them. All have been fairly widely read, and all, whether you love them or hate them, are accessible and carefully crafted.

Please *do* send feedback, using any method that pleases you. For many people, the best one is email to **Louis@Sander.com**

Here are some comments on the verses:

To a Rock 'n' Roll Hater was published in my high school newspaper, probably before you were born.

What I Know about Women is the most recent work in the collection. I'm not highly confident about it, since it's one of the few that don't use rhyme and meter (with rhyme and meter, I at least know if the poem works on those levels; without them, that absolute certainty is lacking).

Some of the verses are acrostics—works with hidden messages, usually in the first letter of each line. Look for such things in *Found in an Overdue Book*, *To the New-born*, and *Valentine II* (in that one, look at the first letter of the first line, the second letter of the second line, etc.)

I claim to have a talent for cleverly “recasting” famous poems. Look at *Upon Julia's Clothes*, *The Tiger and the Lady*, *Incident*, *Mary Lee*, and *Red Wheelbarrow*, and see if you agree. I also claim a general talent for cleverness in verse—see *Love Story*, *Censorship Rampant at Library*, and *Library Lover*.

I *really* hope you like the items in this collection. Show them to others if you like them, and feel free to use the copy machine. Also, don't forget the feedback.



Louis F. Sander
March, 2001

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TO A ROCK 'N' ROLL HATER

(An Original by Wm. Shakespear [sic] Sander)

It must be every parent's goal
To sway his child from rock'n'roll;
He hates to see teen-agers rock,
Forsaking John Sebastian Bach.

Most Chopin lovers hate especially
That young hound dog named Elvis Presley;
It hurts them so to see him sway
With sideburns and his huge D.A.

When parents laugh at rhythm and blues,
The music which their offspring choose,
They should remember their folks, too,
Laughed at jazz when it was new.

But now they feel impelled to buy
Jazz records for their new hi-fi.
These people should improve their minds,
And listen to music of all kinds.

One day they may attend the symphony,
To hear the saxophones and tympani
Play hearty, loud, and very gaily,
Led by Maestro William Haley.

*The West Wind
November 2, 1956*

AUTUMN DISRUPTIONS, 1976

Detachedly I have observed
Fate's hand in other lives;
Since summer, I have come to know
Its icy touch on mine.

Malevolently, first it struck
Me from my chosen work
Into a better place, but one
I'll never love as much.

It shattered an agreement, one
That I had made from dust . . .
A certain ticket to some wealth,
Swept just beyond my grasp.

It had me watch Bill Duncan die—
Stood me beside his bed—
So I could hear the doctors laugh
As they attended Death.

It opened up my eyes and hers,
(my wife, my children's mother),
To see that after fifteen years
We might not last another.

Then as, I think, an afterthought,
To prove its mastery,
That hand moved neighbors, friends of mine,
A dozen miles from me.

Such blows, it seems, should hurt a man,
Should tear his mind and heart—
I wonder if I am alive,
For strangely, they do not.

But toast that Hand's perversity:
Its most atrocious favors,
Its strongest blows, are nothing . . . but . . .
I cry about my neighbors.

*Louis F. Sander
Autumn, 1976*

VALENTINE II

(After Edgar Allan Poe)

Kathy's home, some time ago,
Was near here, through the woods.
Until one day she moved away
With all her worldly goods.
Such little's left to bring to mind
The pleasant times we shared,
It now seems curious to find
Some things of hers still there—
Of course, my friend's old house still stands,
I look on it each day. And
Plants she watered with her hands, each
Spring are on display.
Her yellow car, It has some twins
I see in parking lots,
And in my living room her work
Is hung, (in ropes, five pots).
But there's a nicer, nearer thing
That calls her memory, too . . .
Old Sherlock Holmes could read these words
And see its shape. Can you?

*Louis F. Sander
Late 1970s*

UNPLEASANTRIES

I have heard those horrid words
He spits in your direction—
In momentary fits of rage
They do their vivisection:

“You idiot” . . . “My stupid wife”
And others of that ilk . . .
Such coarse and burlap words for you,
Who’s better fit for silk.

He is my finest friend, so when
They come I do not chide him;
But then again, I wish my friend
Would keep those words inside him.

They hurt me.

Louis F. Sander
ca. 1978

PHILOSOPHY

A billion of the earth believe
That life goes on and on and on . . .
That each of us is born and born,
In endless repetition.

Yet continents hold otherwise . . .
As this: that when one dies, he dies,
And for the re-born, up above
Is Someone in His heaven.

This searcher, seeking hard to know,
Can see (and hope that it is so)
Perhaps the billion are correct,
And there can be the prayers:

That in far faint and future time
They meet again, your path and mine . . .
And I can sing to you of love
Before you are another's.

Louis F. Sander
ca. 1978

VOODOO?

Have you cast this spell on me, assisted by your cat?
By herb-enabled sorcery with mandrake root and bat?
Did you prepare a pentagram, your cauldron full of brew,
To conjure this enchanted mood, these constant thoughts of you?

What else could be the cause of it: the easy strong affection;
The rush of blood when sense or thought are cast in your direction;
The warm vibrations that I feel; the most unsettling power
To call your image into sight and think of you for hours.

The waking up before the sun, your voice inside my head;
The stirring of emotions now, (which I had thought were dead);
The constant longing to be near; the joy when it's fulfilled;
And when another speaks your name, the sudden, surging thrill!

The force of you so overwhelms, (I'm reeling, I confess),
Your *children* even charm my soul—I *know* I've been possessed.
In ancient ways, by dark of night, some one or ones unknown
Incanted and invoked their spell—my life's no more my own.

But was it *you* who did the work? You *are* the witchly type—
A quiet river. Dark. Serene. More deep than meets the eye . . .
You say you've spent your life with cats. You're seen to share their ways.
You seem adept at reading minds, (I've sometimes been amazed).

Your home's a lonely forest place, your hobby, herbal plants.
Your finger rings—those silver things—some coven's sign, perchance?
And then there is that witches' mark you carry on your wrist . . .
That's it! You *are* a sorceress! I've pierced the veil of mist!

So now I *know* you've spun this web—with candle, bell and book
(and doe's dark eyes and raven's hair), but you have overlooked
The fact that your enchanted one . . . well, *he* has powers, too.
And amulets. And runes. And bones. And *stronger* ones than you.

So when he cares to break your spell, he'll easily arrange it—
But here's the strongest magic yet: he never wants to change it.

Louis F. Sander
1978

NEIGHBORS

A time or two I sat with you,
Inside your kitchen as you cooked
And as your children romped and raised
Their noisy boyish heck.

Unsure of me, they clung to you
To ask the silly things boys do,
And as you served us, showed they knew
My answers were correct.

My other friend was in his bed
Or in another city then,
So I had leave to contemplate
The beauty of his wife.

And as I drank and tasted you,
(While wondering idly if you knew)
The feeling softly came and grew
That you could be my life.

Louis F. Sander
1978

FOUND IN AN OVERDUE BOOK

Librarian, Librarian . . .
A girl just like myself—
Unusual, intelligent—
Reads all that's on the shelf.
A question here, a question there,

She answers all we ask.
Her life is full, (of helping, of
Exciting daily tasks).
Librarian, Librarian . . .
Like *me* there at that shelf;
Eventually . . . most certainly . . .
Yes, *I'll* be there myself.

Louis F. Sander
ca. 1980

THE SEEKER

I think I'm dumber than a pigeon
On the subject of religion.
(I *do* come in when it is raining . . .
. . . just never had religious *training*.)

So tell me, if you are a scholar:
Is "Lord of Hosts" the same as Allah?
And what about those warlike Jews?
Why is it that they never lose?

Are they at all like Hare Krishnes,
Eating sprouts and banging dishes?
If you can't help me, then I feature
I shall have to ask a preacher.

But preachers are such funny men . . .
They tell people "Money's sin."
Then they do another funny:
They tell people "Give us money."

And if you ask 'em where it's spent,
All they say's "Give ten percent."
They won't drink rum in Coca-Colas,
They love the killer Ayatollahs . . .

And see if this makes sense to you:
Khomeini was a preacher, too!
It surely makes no sense to me—
I think I'll go and watch T.V.

At 2 A.M. on channel 7,
They tell you how to get to heaven.
If you decide you want to go,
You give up watching HBO.

That's Satan's channel, (though it's funny),
And you can tithe the extra money.
If you have cable, you will find
"The Christian Club" on 39.

The preacher there is real reliable;
He publishes a Learner's Bible.
You get it for a special price,
Upon accepting Jesus Christ.

They say that's all you have to do
If you're an atheist, crook or Jew.
You just get up, breathe deep and swallow,
Saying you're prepared to follow

Ways that seem to be O.K.,
Ways that help you every day;
Not requiring painful penance,
Not requiring church attendance.

Just requiring your belief
That Jesus Christ can save a thief,
Or people into kinky sex—
That Jesus can save *all* our necks.

You *can* believe he's *all* the answers,
Ending wars and curing cancers,
That in the dark he hears and sees us,
But this is first: *Believe in Jesus*.

The Jesus thing is where it's at—
It gets you points, but more than that,
It seems to let you know the score,
And changes you forevermore.

At least that's what the Christians say . . .
That Jesus has a better way.
I think that I could get behind it,
. . . but how's a man like me to *find* it?

Louis F. Sander
August 17, 1982

MY PET

by

#9969H—Juvenile—Multiple Murderer

I found it by the swimming pool, a smoking silver sphere—
It seemed to make some music, so I bent down close to hear.
The ball was partly broken, so I broke it all the way
And found a little thing inside, all soft and green and gray.

I put it in a paper cup, looked closely at its face—
It said it was a (do not know), a Mother of its race.
How such a thing could speak to me, I do not understand,
But all at once I knew it safe to hold it in my hand.

It did not speak again that day, or when I took it home
To put it in the little cage that Gerbil used to own.
The kids all said it's ugly, and they hit me on the head.
I took my pet and hid it in my toybox by the bed.

The next day Mommy found it, and she hit me once again.
It bit her bad. I stepped on it, and flushed it down the drain.
(I didn't really hate it, but my Mom can really spank,
And anyhow, it told me that it *liked* the septic tank).

I didn't see my pet for weeks, until that Sunday night.
Since then, I do not like it—not at all—it wasn't right.
It came in through the toilet, then it pushed beneath the door,
To Mommy in her bedroom, where it bit her bad and more.

It slithered to the cradle, where my Mother's baby lies,
And tugged away the covers there to eat out Baby's eyes.
When Father woke in terror, he first felt it at his groin;
In seconds it had drained him out—it feasted in his loins.

Returning to the toilet then, it washed its fifty legs . . .
(One must be clean and perfect now—before one lays the eggs).
Aeons of evolution said that only rotting meat
Would goad her shiny baby things to come alive and eat.

She preened there by the shower as she wondered of the three,
Which one was best to be the host, the babies' nursery . . .
Just as she turned to Mom, a pouncing shadow hit the mat—
She felt the claws and quickly was devoured by the cat!

And that is how it happened, and I *swear* that it is true.
It was a little animal that tore and bit and slew.
And Kitty came and ate the thing that killed the family.
And I am just a little child . . . so why not set me free?

Poor Kitty died soon after that, (I know, I made the grave),
And if you let me go I'll show you right where Kitty's laid.
For soon we're into springtime, when the wild things come alive,
And *I* know there were eggs in her. And *we* know eggs *survive*.

Louis F. Sander
February 1, 1983

PUBLICITY QUOTATIONS FOR LOVE STORY

What others are saying about Louis F. Sander's moving and poetic *Love Story*:

"For economy of wording, and for sheer variety of vocabulary, it will never be equaled. Never. (*adv.* **1.** Not ever; at no time **2.** not at all; under no conditions.)"

N.W., Lexicographer

"For such a brief work to span this range of time and space, without missing a single element of plot, is unique in all my experience."

W.K., Literary Critic

"Travel, adventure, love, death . . . medical and legal angles . . . I can't wait to see the inevitable movie."

G.S., TV Commentator

"The names—the places—the vivid descriptions—BREATHTAKING!"

S.I.H., Semanticist

"Kudos to the dude who wrote it—he's a better man than I am."

*M.A./C.C., Heavyweight
Champion and Versifier*

"This work deals tastefully and sensitively with 'right to life' subject matter. I recommend it highly to all who have a stake in this vital issue."

*J.H., Theologian, Moralist,
and United States Senator*

"The brief episode of explicit sexual encounter could be expunged for the sake of youthful readers, but such would detract from the unity of the piece."

X.X., Censor

"Although the verbs are somewhat weak, the punctuation tells a story of its own."

K.R., Gymnast

"Twenty-seven stunning stanzas of perfectly-rhymed trochaic dimeter! That's what I love the most about it—it's so . . . so *literate!*"

G.H., Classicist

LOVE STORY

Reservation.
Embarkation.
Aviation.
Registration.
Circulation.
Observation.
Fascination.
Hesitation.
Conversation.
Captivation.
Invitation.
Inclination.
Assignment.
Penetration
Jubilation

Separation

Observation
Consultation
Procreation!
Accusation
Altercation
Operation.
Litigation.
Compensation.
Ruination.

Some vacation.

*Louis F. Sander
July, 1990*

CATS

Alley cats and tommy cats,
Anything you do,
Kitty cats and pussy cats
Pay no mind to you.

Siamese and tabby cats,
Cats in trees or missin',
You can say a million words
And kitties never listen.

Cat instruction, discipline . . .
Kitties never heed 'em.
What to do with kitty cats?
Love 'em well and feed 'em!

*Louis F. Sander
April, 1991 - July, 1993*

ILLIBERAL EDUCATORS

Beware, O new professor,
Deconstructing Western Man,
Of finding in his rubble
Some reconstituted Klan

That visits you at home at night,
Unawed by rank or tenure,
With sheet and cross and noose and knife
To deconstruct your gender.

*Louis F. Sander
April 24, 1991 -
May 17, 1993*

UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave¹ vibration each way free,
O how that glittering taketh me!

Robert Herrick
1648

UPON MARY LEE'S

In newer silks another goes,
As then, in sweetness now it flows:
That liquefaction of her clothes.

And brave new eyes can cast and see
How silent glitter, silk and she
Conform so well to gravity!

Louis F. Sander
1991

¹ bright

THOUGHTS

Consider
A thing that
I wish that
I knew:

What *is* it
That *you* think
That *I* think
Of *you*?

And taking
It further,
I wish I
Could see

The thinking
That *you* think
When *you* think
Of *me*.

I think that
Our thinking
Is somewhat
The same,

Explaining
The shaking
When I think
Your name.

Louis F. Sander
May, 1991

THE HULTMAN COMPANY

I know an abandoned old building,
That I have a key to get in,
Where we could go over and do it . . .
And then we could do it again.

We could cater to all inhibitions,
Or leave them behind at the door
(There's an old leather couch in the office
With a wonderful rug on the floor).

There's a room that is big, with two mirrors,
And a room that is small, with no lights,
Where, whenever you fasten the door shut,
It is safer and darker than night.

For the door has no key on the outside,
And a bolt on the inside, times two,
And every time I go in there,
I find myself thinking of you.

And I think you would like to go in there,
With the darkness and safeness and me
But of course we have never discussed it,
And I only can hope you agree.

For I *love* my abandoned old building,
And I love to be in it alone,
With the darkness and danger and safeness
And the curious feeling of home.

There's a chemical smell, (it's a factory),
And in ways it is falling apart,
But to me it is high inspiration
And a way to the soul and the heart.

There are dusty old desks and a bathroom
And some papers that call up the past,
When they struggled to keep up production
'Til they finally closed it at last . . .

And the ghosts of the factory workers
(And the bosses and office girls, too)—
They still work there, and sometimes I watch 'em,
And I think they would like to meet you.

They are ghosts, so they never would bother
The living who come to make love,
Or embarrass, by factory laughter
At squeaking of couches above.

Or at quiet from inside the darkroom
(*They* know of its benefits, too,
And ever if *we* would go in there . . .
Well, they know more than us what we'd do).

So now *you* know my secret old building,
That I have a key to get in,
Where we could go over and do it . . .
And do it again and again.

Louis F. Sander
September 19, 1992 -
August 17, 1993

THE MEN OF MOGADISHU

THE ATTORNEYS

The men of Mogadishu
Are the self-same men as we,
Their cousins in Chicago,
Houston, Newark and D.C.

And a thousand other cities
From Seattle to Dakar—
You can look to Mogadishu
If you wonder what we are.

The men of Mogadishu
Are the leaders in their lands,
Which have gone the way of every place
With power in the hands

Of the Afro-Mother's people
Who are everywhere the same—
A universal nation,
And "The Brothers" is our name.

Yes, the men of Mogadishu
Are the self-same men as we,
Their soul-mates in Chicago,
Houston, Newark and D.C.

*Louis F. Sander
May, 1993*

THE MEN OF MOGADISHU

THE JANITOR

De mens ob Mogadishu,
Dey be black mens jes' lak me,
An if ol' Whitey wonder
What we do, he jes' can see
De mens ob Mogadishu
What dey doin' on TV.

We be proud and we be warriors
And we likes to has our dope
And we likes to hit our womens
And to make de bitches cope
Wif de cookin' and de feedin'
An de babies an de res'

While de mens is out dere fightin'—
It de thing we do de bes'.
Yeah de mens ob Mogadishu,
Dey be black mens jes' lak me,
An if ol' Whitey wonder
What we do, he jes' can see.

*Louis F. Sander
May - August 1993*

THE MEN OF MOGADISHU

THE SISTER

De men of Mogadishu,
Sho' looks wonderful to me
And I loves de way dey walks about,
It glorious to see.

So much better dan de Whiteys,
Who are little bitty shits—
De men of Mogadishu
Makes me harden in the tits.

And to want one here to fuck me,
Maybe hit me, I don't care,
And to make another baby
Who have Mogadishu hair.

Oh my men of Mogadishu,
Just so warrior-proud and black
Make me glad I am an African—
I wish I could go back

To my sisters and my people
And my cities and my land
And the men of Mogadishu
Far away from Whitey's hand.

*Louis F. Sander
August 14, 1993*

ASYM₁METRIC

Asymmetric haircut on an
Asymmetric beauty . . .
Asymmetric Mary Lee, an
Asymmetric cutie!

Asymmetric styling and an
Asymmetric part . . .
Asymmetric loveliness, this
Asymmetric art!

Louis F. Sander
June, 1993

THE TIGER AND THE LADY

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake
1794

Lady! Lady! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fair asymmetry?

In what far salon or shop
Came the sculpting of thy locks?
On what end did it declare?
What the hand did seize thy hair?

And what fingers worked what art
To twist the sinews of my heart?
And to make that heart so beat,
What dark comb? and what white sheet?

What the scissor? what the blade?
Howso was the shaping made?
What the lotion? what the grasp
Dared thy chestnut beauty clasp?

When the gods threw down their shears
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did they smile their work to see?
Did they who did the stars do thee?

Lady! Lady! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dared frame thy fair asymmetry?

Louis F. Sander
June 28, 1993

INCIDENT

(For Eric Walrond)

Once riding in old Baltimore
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me.
Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."
I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember.

*Countee Cullen
1925*

INCIDENT, TODAY

(For Countee Cullen)

Once on a bus in Baltimore
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,
I saw a little colored boy
Keep looking straight at me.
Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he pulled out
A gun, and touched the trigger.
I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember.

*Louis F. Sander
July 3, 1993*

STUDENT COUNSEL

I've sailed around the bleedin' world
On half a dozen ships.
I've lost an eye and run a bar
For nothin' more than tips.

I've sold my blood for money, and
I've spilled more than my share,
And what the likes of *you* might think,
I do not bloody care.

I've built two solid companies,
And bought a dozen more,
And I will be a part of what
The future has in store.

But nonetheless I *like* you, kid,
So let us take a walk,
And look around the waterfront,
And maybe have a talk

About the things you do in life,
That pay you back or not—
The ones that help you get ahead,
The ones that turn to rot.

The time you spend in buildin' up,
The time in tearin' down.
Two years' worth of the former is
A jewel in my crown:

Of all of my accomplishments,
I surely have to say
The one that's been most useful was
My Harvard MBA!

Louis F. Sander
July 4, 1993

Underwear censor mystifies librarians

McCANDLESS — A serial censor with a penchant for mystery novels has librarians at Northland Public Library scratching their heads. Words such as “underwear,” “slip,” and “bra” have been marked out with increasing regularity in recent weeks, said Jane Jubb, adult services coordinator at the library.

“They really are not the shocking words,” Jubb said. “Profanity sometimes is a target, but seemingly innocuous words more often get the censor’s attention.”

Most non-fiction books have been spared, with mystery novels catching the brunt of the censor’s wrath.

— *North Hills News-Record*

CENSORSHIP RAMPANT AT LIBRARY

“He’s censoring our mysteries, by authors live and dead,
by crossing out the ~~underwear~~. It’s very strange,” Jubb said.
“The f-word, it is never touched, nor naughty words like ‘whores,’
But ‘~~underpants~~’ is stricken out, and ‘~~knickers,~~’ ‘~~bras,~~’ and ‘~~drawers.~~’

“So let us call the FBI, the papers and the cops,
And ~~Frederick of Hollywood~~, until the monster stops.
For censorship, in any ~~form~~, is ~~sheer~~ abomination—
We honor freedom of the press, our country’s firm ~~foundation.~~”

So enter one detective, (former ~~boxer~~, long on ~~brains~~),
A man who has ~~seen everything~~: Police Inspector ~~Hanes~~.
“I know the type,” the ex-~~joek~~ said, “in fact, no cop is ~~hipper~~.
We studied them in college, and I know one, ‘Jack the ~~Zipper.~~’

“They learn it very early, do these book-defacing vipers,
And they begin to ~~pull it off~~ when ~~barely~~ out of ~~diapers~~.
You see the signs in tiny tots (at three years old, already):
They never play with ~~baby dolls~~, their ~~bears~~ are never ‘~~Teddy~~.’

“Then later, they’re the ~~creepy~~ ones, the ~~butt~~ of many rumors,
Afraid to ~~shower in the gym~~, real loners, real late ~~bloomers~~.
In ~~t~~illating darkness, in your building’s inner reaches,
They secretly deface things: ‘~~panties~~,’ ‘~~Skivvy shorts~~,’ and ‘~~breeches~~.’

“~~Behind~~ the ~~stacks~~, as smooth as ~~silk~~, they ~~jockey~~ for position
And pick their book by ~~hook~~ or crook, by ‘~~undies~~ intuition.’
Then furtively they ~~pull it out~~, (the *book*, you dirty mind!)
And cross out ‘~~garters~~,’ ‘~~lingerie~~,’ and more, if they’re inclined.

“They’re hard to ~~catch~~: they ~~slip~~ away, escaping by an ~~inch~~.
But once they’ve been ~~uncovered~~, apprehending them’s a ~~cinch~~.
Most often you will notice sweaty ~~skin~~ and furtive glance,
And hear their ~~heavy breathing~~, often coming in ~~short pants~~.

“Just yesterday, we ~~busted~~ one, down at the Reading Room,
A strange, limp-wristed weaver that they call ‘The ~~Fruit o’ the Loom~~.’
He’d ~~fly~~ out of the ~~rear~~most ~~stacks~~, then mingle with your friends;
When asked what he was ~~covering up~~, he said ‘It all ~~Depends~~.’

“We searched the ~~place~~ he ~~stays~~ in, and of ~~course~~ it’s filled with hampers,
Each full of ~~cotton bras~~ and ~~long johns~~, ~~panty hose~~ and ~~Pampers~~.
We’re rather sure we’ve got your man, this pervert prince of darkness,
For in his ~~tee-shirt~~ pocket, we found six ~~black~~ Magic Markers!”

“I’m glad you ~~pinched~~ the ~~bum~~,” said Jubba, “I’m ~~tickled~~ ~~pink~~ with glee!”
Said ~~Hanes~~, “He’ll serve a ~~lengthy stretch~~ in cell block 34C.”
“The man’s not ~~fit~~ to be at ~~large~~—he’s utterly contemptible—
The ~~naked~~ truth about his ways is frankly, Dear, ~~unmentionable~~!”

So now, my reader, you may ~~feel~~ the ~~tale~~ is at its ~~end~~ . . .
But No! the ~~Playtex~~ pervert was released to strike again.
The prosecutor blew the case: her legal ~~briefs~~ were flawless,
But judge and jury she disgraced—she came before them ~~braless~~!

Louis F. Sander
July 18, 1993

MARY LEE

I have traced the valleys fair
In May morning's dewy air,
My bonny Mary Lee!
Wilt thou deign the wreath to wear,
Gathered all for thee?
They are not flowers of Pride,
For they graced the dingle-side;
Yet they grew in Heaven's smile,
My gentle Mary Lee!
Can they fear thy frowns the while
Though offered by me?

Here's the lily of the vale,
That perfumed the morning gale,
My fairy Mary Lee!
All so spotless and so pale,
Like thine own purity.
And might I make it known,
'T is an emblem of my own
Love,—if I dare so name
My esteem for thee.
Surely flowers can bear no blame,
My bonny Mary Lee.

Here's the violet's modest blue,
That 'neath hawthorns hides from view,
My gentle Mary Lee.
Would show whose heart is true,
While it thinks of thee.
While they choose each lowly spot,
The sun disdains them not;
I'm as lowly too, indeed,
My charming Mary Lee;
So I've bought the flowers to plead,
And win a smile from thee.

Here's a wild rose just in bud;
Spring's beauty in its hood,
My bonny Mary Lee!
'T is the first in all the wood
I could find for thee.
Though a blush is scarcely seen,
Yet it hides its worth within,
Like my love; for I've no power,
My angel Mary Lee,
To speak unless the flower
Can make excuse for me.

Though they deck no princely halls,
In bouquets for glittering balls,
My gentle Mary Lee!
Richer hues than painted walls
Will make them dear to thee;
For the blue and laughing sky
Spreads a grander canopy
Than all wealth's golden skill,
My charming Mary Lee!
Love would make them dearer still,
That offers them to thee.

My wreathed flowers are few,
Yet no fairer drink the dew,
My bonny Mary Lee!
They may seem as trifles too, —
Not, I hope, to thee;
Some may boast a richer prize
Under pride and wealth's disguise;
None a fonder offering bore
Than this of mine to thee;
And can true love wish for more?
Surely not, Mary Lee!

John Clare
Circa 1875

MARY LEE

'T would folly be, a blunder rare,
To quote, then alter, Johnny Clare.
He lov'd so much his Mary Lee—
Such candor would embarrass me.

*Louis F. Sander
August 8, 1993*

THE RANGER

Drifting in my lifelong boat,
The one I love is so remote.
The nearer ones are just O.K.—
Sometimes I wish they'd go away,
So I could shoot the evening star
To plot my course to shores afar
And set some never-hoisted sails
To run before the Northern gales
With lookouts forward and above
For landfall near the one I love.

*Louis F. Sander
August 27, 1994*

TO THE NEWBORN

Child of wonder,
Angel dear,
Silent beauty,
Sleeping here:
Always smile, and
Never fear—
Dad and Mother,
Resting near,
Each love you.

Darling baby,
As you sleep,
Worlds await you—
Earth is sweet.

*Louis F. Sander
August 29, 1994*

LIBRARY LOVER

If Monday evenings lasted for seven days a week,
I'd spend them all with Mary Lee, and never eat or sleep.
I'd read a book, or talk to her, or watch her at the shelf,
Then stump myself on something tough, to go to her for help.

She'd answer me a lot of things, like who, what, when and where,
(And I could spend a little time admiring her hair).
Then over to the copy room...a jingle, click and whirr...
For interesting duplicates that I could show to her:

Some literary cleverness, or sayings of the wise,
And as she read, I'd have the chance to look into her eyes,
And hear the voice that always says my name when first we meet
(Accompanied by tingles in my arms and hands and feet).

I'd dwell upon the beauty in her dress and face and form,
And feel so very fortunate...this room is getting warm...
I think I'll read a magazine...so many different kinds...
But then it's hard to concentrate, since *she* is on my mind.

And anyway, I need a book, so now I can go back
To Reference and Mary Lee, who walks me to the stacks.
(On rubber legs, and short of breath . . . I wonder if she sees,
Or somehow knows, or even *hears*, the knocking of my knees?)

Yet all the while I'm loving it, the books and Mary Lee...
My favorite librarian, my favorite place, and me.
And Monday evenings lasting...my...for seven days a week,
And people understanding why I cannot eat or sleep.

*Louis F. Sander
December 12, 1994*

BAKE ME SOME COOKIES

Bake me some cookies, I want some to try-
To taste 'em, to touch 'em, to give them the eye.
To savor their flavor, their shape and their crunch,
To eat 'em with milk and to pack 'em with lunch.

To see if their bottoms are burnt or all right;
To give them to children to see if they're liked.
To see if you make 'em from cards or from books-
To learn about cookies and children and looks.

To see if these feelings for beautiful you
Are something or nothing: to see if they're true.
To see if you're wifely, in ways that will last,
Or only a beauty whose moment will pass.

To check out your kitchen, potatoes and pie-
So bake me some cookies.
I love you.
That's why.

Louis F. Sander
March 19 - August 15, 1997

TO THE OP-ED PAGE OF THE PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE,
WHICH NEVER PRINTS RHYMING VERSE

(Versions in Standard English and Ebonics)

Poetry that doesn't rhyme?
Sorry, haven't got the time.

*Louis F. Sander
April 13, 1997*

Poetry what do not rap?
Fuck it—we don't dig dat crap.

*Louis F. Sander
April 13, 1997*

RED WHEELBARROW (1923)

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

William Carlos Williams
1923

RED WHEELBARROW (1997)

so much debris
upon

an old wheel
barrow

baked with sun
dried out

bewhitened by
chickens

Louis Frederick Sander
October 19, 1997

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT WOMEN

Not a single thing but this:

That they don't know how strong it is:
The love that they inspire in us.

They can't.

I love one from across a bright-lit reading room,
And through her shiny yellow oaken work desk,
And from my far end of thirty miles of highway.
And I have never been alone with her,
Not once.

Yet one thread of my love for her,
When held between the thumb and index finger,
Could raise the dead
Titanic.
Launch it.
Up above the sea,
To strike an icy cloud
And sink again,
In flames.

One thread.

And they don't know.

Believe it.

*Louis F. Sander
February - April, 1998*

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